

A PLAIN ³
SERMON
TO

A Countrey-Parish
In the DIOCESE of
NORWICH. *Diocesis*

Preached August 1st, 1725.



NORWICH:

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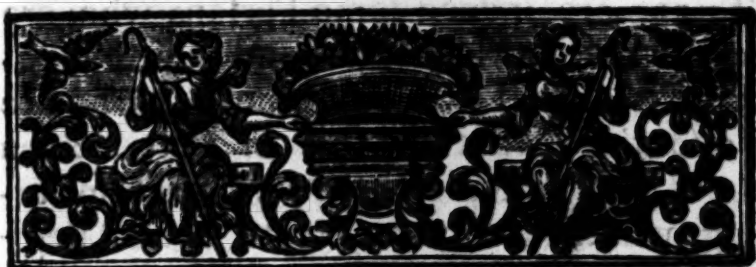
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1. TIMOTHY, 2. Chap. 1. 2. Verse.

I exhort therefore, that first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men.

For Kings, and for all that are in Authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.

THERE is no Subject upon which a sincere and honest Man may be more clearly taught his Duty, than on that which sets before him, how he ought to behave himself with Regard to those *who have the Rule over him*; it is a Point which requires no great Learning to explain, nor Parts or Leisure to learn and understand; but every sober and virtuous Man, that is but willing to *lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty*, may sufficiently know and practice his Duty in this Matter.

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THERE are indeed some Persons who are fond of amusing themselves and their Neighbours with the Titles of Princes; who are for disputing, whether this or that Person has a Right to Rule them; who are for arguing, whether they ought to bear Allegiance to the King that now governs us, or whether they could not with a better Conscience both pray for and submit to some other Person: But an Answer to all that these Men have to say is very easy; their Opinions have no Countenance from Scripture, nor do they at all conduce to the leading quiet and peaceable, or honest and godly Lives.

WHEN our blessed Saviour was on Earth, the Jews came and asked his Opinion about a Matter of this Nature; *They enquired of him, whether it was lawful *to pay Tribute unto Cesar or not*, expecting to hear from him a full Determination against Cesar's Title; but our blessed Saviour made the Titles of Princes no Part of his Religion, but exhorted them to *render unto Cesar the Things that are Cesar's, and unto God the Things that are Gods.*

IN the same Manner the Apostles taught the first Christians; they did not instruct them to dispute the Authority of the Roman Emperors, but took Care to exhort them in e-

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very Place, that * every Soul of them should be subject to the higher Powers; and that they would † submit themselves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake; they ‡ put them in Mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates; they required them to put up Prayers, Supplications, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks for all Men, for Kings and all that are in Authority.

THERE is indeed one Point very observable in the Apostles Doctrines; they do not countenance an Opinion, which has been held by some Men, that Subjects are the Property of their Princes, to be used by them according to their Will and Humour; but they every where exhort to the Duty of Obedience, as to a Thing useful and profitable to them that pay it; they represent Rulers as ** the Ministers of God, for the good of Mankind; as † the Instruments of Providence to support Virtue, and discourage Vice in a wicked World; as Persons, who, if we bear a true and just Allegiance to them, will defend us in leading a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty.

I shall endeavour to let the Subject, I am to Discourse on, before you in this plain

* Rom. 13. ch. † 1. Pet. ch. 2. 13. v. ‡ Titus 3. ch. 1. v. 4. † 1. Peter, 2. ch. 14 v.

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and Christian View of it; and in order to treat it in a Manner suitable to the Occasion of this Day's Thanksgiving; in order to give you a True and just Notion, how indispensably it is our Duty sincerely to pray for, and faithfully to obey the King, whom God was pleased on this Day to set upon the Throne; in order to convince you of the prodigious Folly of those Men who suffer any favourable Notions of a Popish Pretender to be harboured in their Minds, I shall order my Discourse in the following Method.

FIRST, I shall shew you, How impossible it is for us, to expect to live quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty, if we have a Popish Prince to Rule and Govern us.

SECONDLY, I shall observe to you, How fully and truly we may all enjoy the happiness of such a Life, under the present Government. And,

THIRDLY, I shall endeavour to recommend, What must appear to every quiet and honest Man to be his Duty towards the King that now governs us.

1st, I am to shew you, How impossible it is for us to live quiet and peaceable Lives in

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in Godliness and Honesty, if we have a Popish Prince to rule and govern us. It is indeed a very strange and surprizing Thing, that any possible pretence of Religion, should make a Prince a Destroyer of the Welfare of his People; but we have the surest Proof, that it is so in the Case before us; the most undeniable Facts, and a constant Experience, wherever and whenever the unhappy Experiment has been made, do infallibly assure us, that a Popish King is inconsistent with the Happiness of a Protestant Kingdom.

If we look into the World and consider; what has been done in it, the Affairs of all Nations, of our own, of Foreign, do abundantly convince us, that there is no having a Popish King, but he will endeavour either to compel his Subjects into his Religion, or he will enslave and persecute them for their differing from it; he will either destroy the Sincerity and Purity of their Faith; or he will take from them the Happiness of their Lives: this therefore would certainly be our Condition; a Popish Prince would endeavour to make us Papists; and if we were made so, where would be our Godliness and Honesty? Or he would persecute us for being Protestants; and if he did so, how should we possibly lead under him quiet and peaceable Lives;

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1st, I say, a Popish Prince would endeavour to Force us to become Papists; and this we cannot be without the loss of all Godliness and Honesty. I will not take upon me to say, that all Papists are wicked and dishonest, God forbid: Education and Prejudice are powerfull Things; they may not know the Truth, and so be more unhappy than wicked in their Errors; but this I may affirm, that we who have had so great a Light of the Gospel shining amongst us for so many Years, cannot become Papists, without making the greatest Shipwreck of Honesty, Integrity, and a good Conscience: For who, I beseech you, amongst us can be so grossly Ignorant, or can excuse his being so, as not to know, that he cannot consent to have his *Bible* taken from him, and to have the Scriptures read to him only in a Language he does not understand? Or which of us can be willing to come together in this Place not to offer unto God the reasonable Service which we now here pay him; but to hear a *Latin* Service read over without knowing a Tittle of it? Or how can we be brought instead of Acknowledging but **one God* and *one Lord*, and Worshipping only our God and Saviour, to be forced to pray to *Gods many* and *Lords many*, as Papists do to Angels and to Saints, to Men and Wo

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men departed this Life, to Stocks and Stones, to bits of Wood, and Bones of dead Men? Or what Christian, that knows any thing of his Faith, can possibly, instead of receiving the blessed Sacrament, as Christ appointed, profess the monstrous Contradictions which they hold in this Point, and come to adore a Water or bit of Bread, and pay Worship to a Creature instead of the Creator?

I do not design to recount to you all the Errors of Popery, nor to set before you the mischievous Tenets of the Roman Church inconsistent with the publick Welfare of Kingdoms, and destructive of the Comforts and Securities of Men's Lives; but I would mention a few Points, which we must all receive, if we turn Papists; and which, I am sure, we never can receive, unless we can banish from our Hearts every true Notion of Christ and his Religion. *To Search the Scriptures, which contain the Words of eternal Life, and to learn from them to know our Duties; to worship God in Spirit and in Truth, with our Heart, our Soul, our Understanding; to worship only God, and not to give the Honour, due to him, to the Creatures; to partake duely of the Institutions of our blessed*

*** Imaginary Pieces of our Saviour's Cross, which they often pay Devotion to. ** Reliques;*

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Saviour, designed by him for our Benefit, and by a wise Use of them to improve daily in every Virtue; this is to be true and real Christians: But Popery, instead of leading to any of these Things, engages it's Votaries quite another way; and therefore can never without a great Loss of Religion be embraced by you. They may indeed keep their own People in Ignorance, for they take from them *the Key of Knowledge*; they let them have no use of the Scriptures, but, instead of them, they read to them silly Legends and foolish Stories of wonders and Miracles said to be done by Persons, who perhaps never were, or who certainly never did such Things as they tell of them: To their own Disciples they may possibly colour over their Worship of Relicks, and Pictures, and Statues, for they even attempt to * conceal from them, that there is a Commandment against Idolatry: Their monstrous Opinions about the Sacrament they may impole upon Papists, who are bred up from Children to receive and believe every Thing which they tell them. But with what Arguments can they make a Protestant believe these Things? We may turn Pagan or Mahometan, Turk or Infidel, if we can really

* The Papists in some of their publick Catechisms strike out the Second Commandment, and divide the Tenth into Two, for fear the People should not be blind enough to Worship their Images, if they should know of the Second Commandment.

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turn Papist; for there is scarce a greater Evidence of any Thing in the World, than there is, that Popery is an unreasonable, a superstitious, and false Religion,

BUT 2^{dly}, If we were under a Popish Prince; and he could not turn us to his Religion, he would persecute us for our Faith: And so, if we held fast our Integrity, and would not part with our Godliness and Honesty, he would take from us the Peace and Quiet of our Lives: That this would in Truth be so, we are as sure as History and Fact can make us: it has always been so, where there are Popish Princes and Protestant Subjects, and what Reason have We to flatter our selves, that a Popish Prince will not always be the same, or that We should now fare better under one, than We or any other People have ever done? In every Part of the World, where the Roman Religion has had Power, Fire and Sword, Destruction and Ruin, have been the constant Fate of all that could not comply to submit to it.

WE in *England* indeed have had but one Popish Prince in full Power and Authority to give us an Experience of the Temper of that Religion; for King *James the 2^d*. tho' he endeavoured it, yet could not compass it, but lost himself in the Attempt: The first

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Queen *Mary* had Power, and did shew us, what a Popish Prince established over us would do to us,

A * considerable Writer has recounted to us, that in the two first Years of her Persecution, above eight hundred fell Martyrs to their Religion, but the Circumstances and Sufferings of near three hundred are still on Record. Alas! what would our Fore Fathers in those Days of Tryal have given for the Peace and Security which we now enjoy? There may be some Suggestions to mitigate the Sense which you may have of a Popish Power: You may perhaps think, that the Sufferings of the Protestants in Queen *Mary's* Days were not owing to the Queen's Religion, but to her cruel and bloody Temper; or you may imagin, that the Men that suffered were busy Persons. who by opposing their Governours, incurred their Displeasure; that the same might not be your Fate, if we had a Popish Prince; for that you would not meddle in Affairs, but live quiet; and that if you did so, sure no Prince whatever could be so cruel as to disturb and destroy you: These Things, I confess, seem but reasonable; but we have all the Reason in the

* The Author of the Preface to Bishop *Ridley's* Book *de Cana Domini*, supposed to be *Grindal*, afterwards Archbishop of *Canterbury*.

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World not to depend on any of them; Queen Mary was not of worse Passions than other Princes; when she was settled on the Throne, she declared in open Council, that "tho' her Conscience was staid in Matters of Religion; yet she was resolved not to compel or strain others, otherwise than as God should put into their Hearts a Perswasion of the Truth, and this she hoped would be done by the opening his Word to them by godly, virtuous, and learned Preachers." King James the 2d. made a Declaration of the same Sort, and so have other Princes in other Countries: but Popish Princes have never kept their Word in these Matters: the Court of Rome requires them to destroy all, that they call Hereticks; their Confessors press them daily to the Execution; they cannot be true to their Religion if they do not perform it; *They are verily perswaded that they ought to do all they can against us; and are taught to think that in killing us they do God Service;* very often they are sworn to do it; and if they do not do it, they are judg'd Favourers of Hereticks; are liable to Church Censures; and may have Attempts made to deprive them of their Kingdoms: And some or other of these Motives have push'd the bravest and most

powerful, generous and good natur'd Princes, to the most unaccountable Severities to their Protestant Subjects. even contrary to many and signal Obligations: What then can We expect from the Pretender, who has been dependant ever since he was born? has lived daily of their Charities, and Contributions, and can never be true to any Notions of Gratitude for their Favours and Support, but at the Expence of Our Fortunes, Religion and Lives. And as to your hoping to sit still and be quiet, and so to avoid the Fury of a Popish Prince; That would be an unhappy Dream; for search * our History: it was not the Bishops and Clergy, not the learned and disputers against Popery, not the Men of Figure and Ability to oppose it, that were the only Persons, who were burnt for their Religion; but Men and Women of all States, Ranks and Conditions, many, such as you and your Children are, were brought to the Flames; and that not for talking against Popery, or for openly professing themselves to be Protestants, but there was a strict and vigilant Eye over them, and if any were observed not to be constant at the Popish Service, they were immediately sent for and questioned about Religion, and if they did not

* See the Martyrology, and Bp. Burnet's History of the Reformation, Reign of Queen Mary.

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give such Answers as would evidence their being Papists, they were sentenc'd four, five, six or seven, nay once thirteen, to the same Fire: Oh! what a prodigious Vengeance is there in the World, if it should please God ever to let it loose upon us? if, instead of the Safety and Quiet which we now have, a Day of Tryal should come over us, in which we might not know, which of us should to morrow morning be called to the Stake, or whether we should close the present Evening, without the Loss of a Friend, a Neighbour, a Relation, or a Child, to be cut off in most exquisite Torments?

I know not how it is but we are an easy-temper'd and forgetful People: in the Day of Adversity we have Courage to bear and to attempt to free ourselves from Troubles; but a little Sun-shine, a few Days of better Things, set our Hearts at Ease, and we forget, nay and grow almost fond of the Hands that would misuse us.

WHEN We were in Danger from a Popish Prince, every one was glad to escape so terrible a Ruin; but now we have been safe and easy for a long Time, we are apt to think that Popery would do us little or no Harm: but I would have every one seriously examine this Matter; God has been pleased to let

let thousands suffer in the Nations that are near us, since we have been secure; and even now there are such Hardships upon Protestants abroad, as are sufficient to convince us, that Popery is still the same, that it always was; and that Popish Princes have and will always endeavour to convert or destroy their Protestant Subjects; and that there is nothing under God, but the Prosperity of the present Government, which secures us from being called to the uncomfortable Choice of either receiving the Roman Faith, contrary to all Reason and Religion, or else of being brought to pay for our Integrity all our Happiness in this World, nay our very Lives.

But I am to consider in the Second Place, how truly we may lead our Lives in Peace and Quiet, in Godliness and Honesty, under the present Government. And here, I think, take *Godliness* and *Honesty*, *Peace* and *Quiet*, in what Sense you will, we have most happy Experience, that we may if we please, lead our Lives in the Enjoyment of them. God is pleased to pour down upon the present Times the greatest and most signal Blessings; former Reigns have had many uncomfortable Circumstances in their Prosperity; but now our Plenty and Peace is so great, and so prosperous the State of Affairs, that the Spi-

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rit of Party can scarce live. We hardly know what to complain of, or where to find Fault: there always were, and always will be, some Persons, who thro' Pride or Ambition, thro' a Spirit of Singularity, or an Affectation of meddling in Things that belong not to them, will be pretending to pry into Affairs of State, and to suggest to their Neighbours, that Matters are not so well as they ought to be, and to raise uneasiness and Suspicions about them; but 'tis very easy for an honest Man to find an Answer to every Insinuation of this Sort: Weak or designing Men may make themselves discontented; but surely We can have no more than what we have to make us happy; Plenty and Peace, a Security of our Lives, Estates and Religion, a Protection in our Callings, and the happy Privilege of sitting down every Man *under his own Vine, and his own Fig-Tree*, to eat the Fruit of his honest Labours. — Government was designed to give us these Blessings: and *for this Cause pay we Tribute* to those that rule us; because *they are God's Ministers attending continually upon this very Thing*. And I might appeal to any one, whether We are not so fully protected in all these Happineses, as to make all the Tribute we pay, an easy Purchase for the Comforts we enjoy! A Sense of these Things must in Time spread thro' the Kingdom, and a few Years Continuance

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uance of the publick Prosperity will surely bring all our Disputes down to the Ground; will teach us to know them that rule over us, and to consider the good they do us: And this Consideration alone will lead us to put up Prayers and Supplications, Intercessions and giving of Thanks for the King; Thanks, that it has pleased God, by a great many Providences, to bring him to the Throne: Prayers and Intercessions, that the same Almighty Power would so protect and support him and his Royal Family, that the Happiness of his Government may have no Interruption; but that we may always have the Liberty we now enjoy of living peaceable and quiet Lives under him, in the Performance of our Duties towards God and towards Man.

BUT I am in the Third and last Place to exhort you to the Performance of this Part of your Duty, by representing to you how you ought to behave yourselves to the King, and to those that are in Authority under him, by a Peaceable and Quiet Submission to your Governours, an hearty and faithful Obedience to them, so loyal and sincere, as to induce you to pray to God for their Prosperity; this is your Duty. Kings have a Right to the Allegiance of their Subjects, or else there could be no Order or Government in the World: and I might justly say, that there
is

is no King, that can have a greater Right to the Obedience of his Subjects, than the Prince that now fills the Throne of these Kingdoms. If I were to examine the Foundations of Government, or the Constitution of our own Kingdom, it would be easy to make it appear, that there is no Person in the World, but his Majesty King *GEORGE*, who has any Right or Title to be our King: but I will not enter into this Subject, for God has not made it our Business to determin Matters of this Nature, and to appoint, who shall rule Kingdoms, and who shall not: These Things have many Years ago in the wisest Manner been considered for us by Those, that are above us, and We are bound by the most Sacred Engagements to Loyalty and Submission; and I wish I could recommend to all of our Degree, (not a Spirit to cavil at and dispute the Appointments of our Superiors, but) that happy Temper mentioned by the Apostle, which teaches us, *duely considering what our Station is, * to study to be quiet and mind our own Business*: if indeed we had a King that would bring upon us the Miseries of Popery, there would be Reason for us to dread the Evil, and to pray to God to direct us to a Deliverance; for the meanest Subject has a Right to his Life, his Fortune and Religion; but when a King is *the Minister of God for*

* 1 Thesst 4. ch. 11. v.

the good of his People you * must needs be Subject, not only for Wrath but for Conscience Sake; if he gives you a Security to lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty, such a Life you ought to lead, this is your bounden Duty; this will make you acceptable and well pleasing unto God. And thus I would have you consider your Rank and State of Life, my Brethren; We are not to controul the Government and dispose of the Affairs of the Nation; an easier and more Private Path lies before us. We have the secure Enjoyment of every Thing which we can, or ought to call our own; what Change can give us more? or what have we to do with the Heats and Disputes of Party, when we may keep our selves happy by the Practice of clearer and more agreeable Duties? to *Fear God and Honour the King*; to live in Peace and Friendship with one another; to * mark those that would cause Divisions amongst us, and to avoid them; to learn to * render to all their Dues, Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, and Honour to whom Honour, and to keep our selves disengaged from all evil Humours and peevish Contests; this is the ready Way to Peace and Quiet in this World, and by an honest Discharge of the true Duties of our Lives, to a more happy State in the World to come.

* Rom. 13. v 4. * Rom. 16. c. 17. v. † Rom. 13. c. 7. v.

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I have now gone thro' what I designed to lay before you ; but I would observe that the Apostle exhorts, that Prayers and Supplications be made for all Men : Papists are indeed our Enemies, and if they had Power they would ruin and destroy us ; and this we have a Right to know, in order to honour and obey those that protect us against them ; but then, I must exhort you, as Christians, not to hate your Enemies, but *to bless them that curse you, to do good to them that hate you, to pray for them that would despitefully use you and persecute you ; that you may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven.* You ought to pray for these Men, that God would bring them to the Knowledge of the Truth ; that he would turn their Hearts, and put into them a better Spirit ; that he would teach them so to lead their Lives in this World, that when the Divisions and Heats of this World shall be over, they and We may be made one Fold under one Shepherd Jesus Christ our Saviour, and be admitted together into the Happiness of ^{the} Kingdom of ^{Heaven}.

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THE END.